



# CITY OF LODI

## COUNCIL COMMUNICATION

**AGENDA TITLE:** Mokelumne River Boating Safety Issues

**DATE:** July 5, 2000

**PREPARED BY:** LARRY D. HANSEN, CHIEF OF POLICE

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** That Council review the following report and direct staff to explore with San Joaquin County possible future actions for water safety in the Mokelumne River.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:** On June 25<sup>th</sup> an 11-year-old boy was killed and his father seriously injured when a ski boat struck their anchored canoe in the Mokelumne River. The driver of the ski boat had not been drinking and alcohol has been ruled out as a contributing factor. Preliminary investigation by the Sheriff's Marine Unit concludes that boat-driver inattention appears to be the causing factor. The Police Department has reviewed issues of boating safety and has had preliminary discussions with the San Joaquin County Sheriff's Department. Following is a summary of past discussions regarding the jurisdictional issues on the Mokelumne River:

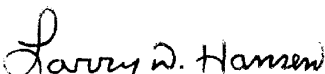
- 1967 – Lodi Community Development Department issued the Mokelumne River Report. Two recommendations were to limit motorized boats to 7 mph or less, or post "no wake zone" (i.e. 5-mph zone).
- 1996 – Lodi Police Department recommended assuming patrol of Lodi Parks and eliminating the Park Ranger position. The Police Department did not recommend assuming patrol of the Mokelumne River from the San Joaquin County Sheriff's Department due to additional staffing, equipment, and training costs. City Council directed Police Department to assume responsibility for patrolling City parks. Council opted not to direct Police to patrol the River, or request that the Board of Supervisors impose a 5mph speed zone on the River.
- The San Joaquin County Sheriff's Department has boating law enforcement responsibility for all navigable waterways in San Joaquin County. The County Board of Supervisors and the Army Corps of Engineers have regulatory authority over navigable waterways.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:** Lodi Police will meet further with San Joaquin Sheriff Officials to discuss:

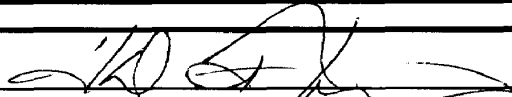
- 1) Increased Sheriff's boating enforcement / presence.
- 2) Various speed restrictions available through County ordinance.
- 3) Various options for Police / Sheriff partnerships with enforcement.

**FUNDING:** Non-applicable at this time

cc: City Attorney

  
Larry D. Hansen  
Chief of Police

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_

  
H. Dixon Flynn -- City Manager

## Jennifer Perrin

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**From:** Mark X. Vincent [mvincent@softcom.net]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 04, 2000 2:15 PM  
**To:** Steve Mann; Philip Pennino; Susan Hitchcock; Keith Land; Alan Nakanishi  
**Subject:** Mokelumne River Traffic

My name is Mark Vincent and I reside at 1344 Rivergate Dr. My back yard is adjacent to the river. Something must be done to ensure more responsible use of the river by boaters.

When I moved here in 1989, boat traffic was mostly by people who lived on the river and was conducted in a generally responsible way. There were several pontoon boats, many small aluminum boats with small motors, a few ski boats, many canoers and kayakers and NO JET SKI's. Over the last eleven years, I have watched the boat traffic evolve into mostly jet ski's and motor boats. I rarely see a pontoon boat and canoe and kayak traffic is much less. Kids floating down the river in various inflatable devices are also a rare event.

I have a 12 ft. aluminum boat that I haven't even bothered to put in the river the last few years because it has become too dangerous. Jet skiers are the most irresponsible. They have filled my boat with water by splashing it as a game. One jet skier even soaked me with his spray and thought it was funny. I can't count all the times I had to dodge a jet skier because he was on my side of the river when he cut the corner of a curve.

The other primary problem is a group of people drinking alcoholic beverages in large boats and driving irresponsibly. They throw their bottles and cans overboard to punctuate their lack of concern about their behavior.

The accident in late June where the stationary canoe was run over by a ski boat was very unfortunate but predictable. I was surprised it took this long to happen. The question of "how to make people use the river responsibly" must be addressed now.

My suggestion is as follows: Patrol the river intermittently and issue citations to enforce the laws. Use the back yard of private residences to take pictures of violators and issue citations. You can use mine anytime without asking. The key is to use unpredictable enforcement. I think boaters will quickly start complying with the laws, move their boating to other waters or suffer the consequences of repeated citations (loss of license?). This situation is a classic case of the old 80/20 rule. Eighty percent of the problem is caused by twenty percent of the people.